BATMAN

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Don't miss DARK KNIGHT™ #1!

THE FILM FREAK WAS BORN FROM THE FRONT DEATH OF FAILED ACTOR BURT WESTON.

IT WAS A SCENE RIGHT OUT OF "THE STING"--

--STAGED WITH BLANKS, FALSE BLOOD, AND THE HELP OF FRIEND AND FELLOW ACTOR AL JACOBS.

THE ENSUING CAT BURGLAR SPREE WAS INSPIRED BY "TO CATCH A THIEF-!" -- WITH CARY GRANT REPLACED BY CAGNEY.

TOP O' THE WORLD, MA!

REPORTER JULIA PENNYWORTH REVEALED TO THE WORLD THAT THE FILM FREAK WAS CERTAINLY BURT WESTON--AND PROMPTLY BECAME HIS FIRST SERIOUS TARGET, ALTHOUGH THE "PSYCHO" SCENE ULTIMATELY FAILED.

DIRECTOR PAUL VASSERIA WAS INTERVIEWED.

YES, I REJECTED WESTON FOR THE STARRING ROLE IN ONE OF MY FILMS.

HE'S A HAMMY EGOMANIAC WHO'LL DO ANYTHING FOR ATTENTION.

JEALOUS OF CATWOMAN--

--ROBIN TEAMED WITH BULLOCK--

--WHOSE MOVIE-BUFF KNOWLEDGE HELPED INTERPRET THE FILM FREAK'S CLUES--

--AND THUS ANTICIPATE HIS MOVES, IF ALWAYS A HALF-STEP TOO LATE.

INDEED, ONE SUCH CLUE, DULY STAKED OUT--

--PROVED TO BE A MERE RUSE TO THROW EVERYONE OFF, WHILE WESTON MADE A NEAR-FATAL ASSAULT ON FORMER GIRLFRIEND INDIA BLUE.

THE APE SUIT, OF COURSE, WAS INSPIRED BY "KING KONG".

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AND NOW, THE TEAM OF ROBIN AND HARVEY BULLOCK IS ONCE AGAIN LEFT BEHIND BY--

BAT MAN

WE WERE RIGHT, SELINA-- WESTON'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR AL JACOBS' APARTMENT BUILDING.

HE MEANS TO KILL EVERYONE FROM HIS PAST--EVERYONE HE HAS A GRUDGE AGAINST.

AND I SAY IT'S TIME TO RING THE CURTAIN ON HIS FINAL ACT..

LET'S MOVE, BATMAN!

BOX-OFFICE SMASH

DOUG MOENCH . TOM MANDRAKE . JOHN COSTANZA . ADRIENNE ROY . LEN WEIN
WRITER ARTIST letterer colorist EDITOR

MEANWHILE AT REGALE HEADQUARTERS, BULLOCK AND ROBIN ARE ABOUT TO CATCH UP...

THE GEEK SEEMS TO KNOW OUR EVERY MOVE IN ADVANCE...

YEAH, AND I WISH YOU'D FIGURE OUT *HOW*, BULLOCK.

SO FAR, BATMAN AND CATWOMAN ARE MAKING US LOOK LIKE *PIKERS*.

...ALMOST AS IF HE'S GOT THIS OFFICE *BUGGED* OR SOMETHIN'...

WAIT A MINUTE!

YEAH--"REAR WINDOW"?!

THAT'S IT! IT'S GOTTA BE!

AND I'LL BET A BOX O' BUTTERED POPCORN *THAT'S THE WINDOW!*

COME ON--ACROSS THE *STREET!*

AND!

I *TOLD* YA!

BWAK

MAYBE *HE* AIN'T HERE, BUT TEN TA ONE THAT *HE'S* SET ON *SLOW SPEED*--GIVIN' HIM SIX OR EVEN EIGHT HOURS OF *SPYIN' TIME*...

...RIGHT THROUGH THAT *VIDEO CAMERA*--WITH A *TELEPHOTO LENS* FOCUSED ON THE WINDOW OF *YOUR OFFICE*, COMMISH!

NO *SOUND* FROM THIS DISTANCE--BUT WITH *REWIND* AN' *SLOW MOTION*, READIN' LIPS IS *EASY*!

HERE...LEMME REWIND THE TAPE... TURN ON THE *TV*... AND I'LL *PROVE* IT...

THERE! YA SEE?

THIS IS HOW HE KNEW WHEN ME AN' THE KID WERE GOIN' OVER TO QUESTION *INDIA BLUE!*

JUST LIKE HE'S KNOWN *EVERYTHING* DISCUSSED IN YOUR OFFICE, COMMISH, AND *NO WONDER* HE--

BULLOCK FREEZES AS THE TAPED IMAGE CHANGES--AND NOW THERE IS SOUND..

GREETINGS, BATMAN AND CATWOMAN.

IT'S *HIM!*

YEAH--AND I FINALLY BEAT CAT-LADY TO SOMETHING..

I'M NOT DONE, *YOU KNOW,* AND AT THIS VERY MOMENT YOU'RE LOOKING AT EVERY CLUE YOU NEED TO DEDUCE THE REST OF IT.

"EVERY CLUE"... BUT WITH THE LOUSY RESOLUTION OF VIDEO, EVEN *FREEZE-FRAME* WON'T HELP..

WAIT-- I GOT IT! ANTONIONI'S *"BLOW-UP".*

WE CAN DO IT!

WITH THAT NEW *VIDEO-PRINTER* USED TO STUDY INDIVIDUAL FRAMES FROM *BANK SECURITY CAMERAS--* AND *COMPUTER ENHANCEMENT--* AT LEAST WE'LL BE ABLE TO *SEE* THE CLUES!

COME ON--LET'S GET THIS TAPE TO THE *LAB BOYS!*

AN ACTOR'S APARTMENT: BED, FULL-LENGTH MIRROR, AND DREAMS...

YOU TALKIN' TO *ME?*

WELL, I'M THE ONLY ONE *HERE,* SO IF YOU *AIN'T* TALKIN' TO ME--

--THEN WHO THE--

OH, BUT I *AM* TALKING TO YOU, AL...

HUH?!

CONTINUED ON 35TH PAGE FOLLOWING.

...OR SHOULD I CALL YOU "THE MAN WHO NEVER TOO KNOW---?

--ALTHOUGH REGRETTABLY NOT ENOUGH ABOUT SECURITY LOCKS.

TOOK US TOO LONG TO REACH THE STREET, CATWOMAN!

HE'S ALREADY INSIDE!

KEESH

BREAKING GLASS-- FROM AL JACOBS' APARTMENT!

B-B-BURT...?

OH, GOD, BURT... PLEASE...

B-BURT WESTON.. HE WAS J-JUST HERE...

...ATTACKED ME...

...WENT OUT THE *WINDOW*... WHEN HE HEARD YOU COMING UP THE *STAIRS*...

YOU TAKE THE *ALLEY*, CATWOMAN!

I'LL SEARCH THE *ROOFS*!

WELL, SO LONG, AL.

INSTEAD OF *WAITING TABLES* BETWEEN ROLES, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN A *TAXI-DRIVER.*

NO SIGN OF HIM DOWN HERE EITHER, BATMAN-- BUT HOW COULD HE ESCAPE SO *FAST?*

I HAVE A FEELING HE *DIDN'T.*

IN FACT, I'M BETTING HE TOOK HIS *OWN* SWEET *TIME.*

WE'VE BEEN *DUPED,* CATWOMAN-- MEET ME BACK IN THE *APARTMENT*

HE'S *GONE*-- TO THE HOSPITAL *EMERGENCY ROOM?*

NO.

IT'S *TOO LATE* FOR THAT

WHILE WE WERE OUT IN THE ALLEY, ON THE ROOF... WESTON *CAME BACK* TO FINISH THE *JOB?*

THE HAND OVER HIS "*BLEEDING*" MOUTH TO MUFFLE HIS VOICE... MORE PHONY BLOOD... ON HIS KNEES TO CONCEAL THE HEIGHT DIFFERENCE ...

WHEN WE BURST IN, THERE WERE *TWO* "*ALS*" HERE, ONE DEAD IN THE CLOSET--

"-- AND THE OTHER, A MUCH BETTER ACTOR THAN HIS *FAILED CAREER* WOULD INDICATE."

HE *NEVER LEFT*-- SIMPLY STRIPPED OFF JACOBS' OUTER CLOTHING AND *POSED* AS HIS ALREADY SLAIN VICTIM.

RIGHT UNDER THEIR NOSES, FILM FANS, AND A HARD ACT TO TOP...

...BUT NOW FOR MY FINAL, *BRAVURA* PERFORMANCE.

WELL... GUESS I'D BETTER PHONE GORDON...

YES, DO THAT -- AND THEN WE'RE DAMNED WELL GOING TO *STOP* THIS FREAK BEFORE HE ASSUMES HIS *NEXT* ROLE.

YOU KNOW *ME*, BATMAN -- AS GAME AS EVER... BUT WHAT *IS* HIS NEXT ROLE?

I HAVEN'T A CLUE, BUT I *CAN* GUESS ITS *MOTIVATION* -- UPSTAGING HIS OLD DIRECTOR'S *MOMENT* IN THE SPOTLIGHT...

...AND GETTING REVENGE FOR LOSING THE BEST PART HE *ALMOST* HAD.

HERE YOU GO, BULLOCK -- THE COMPUTER-ENHANCED BLOW-UP OF THAT *VIDEO-PRINT* YOU WANTED...

...AND DON'T *SPILL* COFFEE ON IT LIKE YOU DO WITH *EVERYTHING ELSE*, BECAUSE I'M *NOT* DOING *ANOTHER* ONE.

THANKS A *HEAP*, SUNNY JIM.

SEE, KID? NOW WE CAN READ THE *TITLES* ON THESE *CASSETTE BOXES* BEHIND HIM...

AND IF WE COUNT "*KONG*" AND "*PLANET OF THE APES*" AS THE *SAME CLUE* -- FOR THE ATTACK ON *INDIA BLUE*...

...THAT LEAVES ONLY *TWO TITLES* UN-ACCOUNTED FOR!

WHICH TWO, BULLOCK?

"*ADRIAN MESSENGER*" AND "*THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH*."

I NEVER SAW "*THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER*"

IT'S THE ONE WHERE KIRK DOUGLAS PUTS ON MAKEUP TO LOOK LIKE HIS *VICTIMS*...

AND "*THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH*" IS *HITCHCOCK*, RIGHT?

RIGHT -- TWO VERSIONS, SECOND ONE IN COLOR WITH JIMMY STEWART, JUST RERELEASED...

...ABOUT SOME GUY PLANNIN' TO MURDER A FOREIGN EMBASSY OFFICIAL...

BRILLIANT SUSPENSE SEQUENCE AT THE END--THE ASSASSINATION'S GONNA TAKE PLACE IN THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL DURING A CONCERT...

...AND THE SHOT'S GOTTA BE TIMED TO A CRASH OF CYMBALS AT THE CLIMAX OF THE MUSIC PIECE, BUT DORIS DAY--

CATWOMAN JUST CALLED--THE FILM FREAK HAS STRUCK AGAIN, THIS TIME SUCCESSFULLY.

HE MURDERED AL JACOBS, THEN MADE HIS ESCAPE MADE-UP TO LOOK LIKE JACOBS...

THERE GOES "THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER"--NARROWIN' HIS FINAL CRIME DOWN TO "THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH".

WE'RE FINALLY AHEAD OF BATMAN AND CATWOMAN, BULLOCK

NOW LET'S CRACK THE CASE ON OUR OWN AND SHOW BATMAN THAT THE CAT-LADY AIN'T ALL THAT HOT.

WHAT ON EARTH HAS GOTTEN INTO YOU, ROBIN?

MURDERS ARE BEING ATTEMPTED--AND ONE HAS ACTUALLY BEEN COMMITTED!

THIS DIVISIVENESS AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE COMPETITION HAS GOT TO STOP!

I'M PUTTING AN END TO IT AND CALLING EVERYONE TOGETHER--

"--RIGHT NOW!"

ALL RIGHT.

IT'S TIME TO STOP MUDDLING IN TWO DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS--TIME TO START SHARING INFO AND COOPERATING --TIME TO STOP THIS KILLER!

I AGREE, GORDON, AND IF I'D KNOWN HOW FAR ROBIN AND BULLOCK HAD GONE WITH THEIR INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION...

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT ME TO DO-- WHILE YOU WERE OFF GALLIVANTIN' WITH HER?!

EASY, ROBIN!

EASY IS RIGHT! WHY CAN'T YOU JUST LET ME BE YOUR FRIEND AS WELL AS THE BATMAN'S--?

ENOUGH!

IF YOU'LL RECALL, WE'VE ALREADY AGREED TO END THIS DIVISIVE BEHAVIOR!

NOW IF WE COULD GET ON WITH THE SHARING OF INFO...?

POINT TAKEN, GORDON, AND I'LL START.

CATWOMAN AND I ARE CONVINCED THAT WESTON WILL NEXT ATTACK THE DIRECTOR PAUL VASSERIA--WHOSE NEW FILM IS BEING GIVEN ITS WORLD PREMIERE IN A GOTHAM THEATER TOMORROW NIGHT..

THAT FITS WITH OUR "MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH" CLUE-- A MOVIE ABOUT A MURDER ATTEMPT IN A THEATER, THE GUNSHOT TO BE MUFFLED BY A CLASH OF CYMBALS...

WAIT A MINUTE--VASSERIA'S FILM IS CALLED "BOOM!"--AND HE SAID IT'S A HITCHCOCKIAN -- THRILLER ABOUT TWO TERRORISTS WHO BLOW UP A NUCLEAR PLANT..

...MAKIN' A NOISE A LOT LOUDER THAN ANY CYMBALS!

THAT'S IT! THE FILM FREAK'S GONNA SHOOT VASSERIA AT THE EXACT MOMENT OF THE EXPLOSION ON THE FILM'S SOUNDTRACK!

AND LET'S KEEP IT HOT UNTIL BURT WESTON IS *BURNED*

YEAH--LET'S DO IT FOR [illegible] TEAM!

VASSERIAS

BOOM

SPECIAL PREMIERE

MY MEN HAVE CASED TH'S THEATER *INSIDE OUT*, AN' A LOT BETTER THAN THE *MAFIA* GUYS SEARCHED THAT RESTAURANT IN "*THE GODFATHER*".

"...AND NOBODY'S GONNA GET IN WITH A GUN EITHER..."

IT'S CALLED *SECURITY MEASURES*, SIR.

[illegible] SOME *FILM CRITIC*, IT WON'T DO HIM ANY GOOD WITHOUT A *PIECE*

DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON OUTSIDE?! THE MOST RESPECTED FILM CRITICS IN THE *WORLD*--VIRTUALLY *ALL* OF THEM--BEING TREATED LIKE *COMMON CROOKS*!

[illegible] IN, THEY'LL BE SO DISGRUNTLED AND PARANOID THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO CONCENTRATE ON THE *SCREEN*!

BETTER THAN LETTING BURT WESTON RUN YOUR LIFE, MR VASSEKIA

I JUST *THOUGHT* OF SOMETHING -- WHAT IF IT AIN'T *EXACTLY* LIKE THE HITCH FILM" NONE OF HIS *OTHER* MOVIES WERE EXACTLY LIKE THE *MOVIES* HE BASED 'EM ON

I MEAN WHAT IF IT *AIN'T A GUN?*

HE *KNOWS* WE'RE ON HIM AT THIS POINT -- AND MAYBE EVEN *HE* AIN'T CRAZY ENOUGH TO CRASH THE PREMIERE IN

GOT A BEEF AGAINST THESE *CRITICS* AS WELL AS HIS FORMER

THE BATMAN INTIMATELY KNOWS TRUTH IN THE PICTURES -- AND HE DOES NOT LIKE IT

MAYBE HE CAME IN HERE LAST NIGHT AND PLANTED AN *EXPLOSIVE* SOMEWHERE -- A *TIME-BOMB*

IF HE KNEW THE STARTING TIME OF THE FILM AND SOMEHOW GOT HOLD OF THE ADVANCE PRINT--

HAVE YOUR MEN SEARCH THE OUTSIDE OF THE THEATER, BULLOCK AND YOU CHECK THE BASEMENT!

LOOK *BACKSTAGE* BEHIND THE *SCREEN!*

CATWOMAN, TAKE A FLASHLIGHT UP TO THE BALCONY AND SCAN THE *CEILING!* I'LL TAKE THE [illegible] OFFICE!

HE COULD STILL TIME IT TO *COINCIDE* WITH THE *CW-SCREEN EXPLOSION!*

BUT NOW, ON THE THIRD NIGHT

ONE + ONLY NODS

NOTHING -
WE MUST BE
ON THE WRONG
TRACK

I KNEW
I SHOULD'VE
TAKEN THE WEEK'S
BOX-OFFICE RECEIPTS
TO THE BANK

NONE OF US
FOUND A THING,
BATMAN

HOW 'BOUT
HERE?

AND THEN
IT HITS HIM!

OF COURSE! IT'S NOT *MONEY FROM THE SAFE* HE'S AFTER--NOR EVEN THE *SCREEN* OR THE *THEATER* IN GENERAL!

IT'S *VASSERIA'S* SUCCESS HE'D WANT TO *BLOW UP!*

LEAVE THAT GATE OPEN

IT'S THE *FILM ITSELF* THAT'S HIS TARGET!

HE'S GOING TO DESTROY THE FILM ITSELF!

ALL RIGHT - IF THE PROJECTION

DONE - - SIXTY SECONDS, AND THEN BOOM!

EVEN AFTER ALL THOSE RIDICULOUS *DISTRACTIONS*, THE FILM'S GOT 'EM, BABY..

AND JUST WAIT'LL THEY SEE THE *CLIMAX*

I ALWAYS KNEW YOU COULD MAKE A *BIG SMASH*, PAULIE

NOW

AND THE POLICE WILL NEVER FIND THE BOMB IN TIME

THE BATMAN!

LESS THAN THIRTY SECONDS TO MY BIG CLIMAX AND THE IDIOT PROJECTIONIST BLOWS A BULB!

I DON'T

I'LL LOOK

OUT OF MY WAY! THERE'S LESS THAN TWENTY SECONDS LEFT

R-UN!!
#27

SO MUCH FOR THE BIG BOX OFFICE REPEAT

BUT WESTON'S STILL ON THE LOOSE

WHERE?

WHAT'S LEFT

HE'S A DEAD MAN! I'VE GOT HIM IN THE HOSPITAL AND HE'S A JACKASS!

JULIA! THE ONE WHO FIRST EXPOSED HIM, ROBIN-- BUT HE CAN HAVE HER.

"PSYCHO" SCENE FAILED WITH HER-- AND HE MAY WANT TO TRY IT SEPIA!

IN FACT, HE MAY BE DOING SO RIGHT NOW-- USING THIS CRIME TO

YET, A COLD DRAFT AT HER THROAT

YEAH, BUT THE CRITICS

THE

THE

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

I'VE SEEN ONE OF THESE SINCE DAWN!

THE

NOBODY MAKES A MONKEY OUT OF NORMAN BATES, MISS PENNYWORTH

NOBODY!!

JULIA!!

BOOOOOM!

YOU'RE RIGHT, BULLOCK!

THAT EXPLOSION CAME FROM THE ROOF!

PIECE O' CAKE FOR A CAT AND A FORMER CIRCUS AERIALIST, RIGHT, LADY?

RIGHT, ROBIN -- I'LL RACE YOU!

BULLOCK, PHONE YOUR MEN AND TELL THEM TO SECURE THE BUILDING!

:NNGHH:

YOU GOT IT, BATMAN--AN' GOOD LUCK.

SO WHERE ARE THE *BIPLANES*, MISS PENNYWORTH...?

OR AT LEAST THE *HELICOPTERS*...

AT LEAST THE ELEVATOR'S FALL HAS *CLEARED THE SHAFT*...

AFTER ALL, WE *MUST* END THIS THING IN *STYLE*...

MMMM..?

AH, YOU AWAKEN, MISS PENNYWORTH --JUST IN TIME FOR YOUR FALL.

YOU SEE, I'VE DECIDED THAT--

--FAY WRAY YOU ARE NOT.

FAREWELL, MISS--

--POOOFF!!

ROBIN!?

BUT I EXPECTED--

ME, WESTON-- AND JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME?

WELL, NEVER LET IT BE SAID I DISAPPOINT MY FANS.

NOW FREEZE-- IT'S ALL OVER!

NOT QUITE, HERO!

KING KONG WASN'T THE ONLY MEAN MONKEY IN FILMS, YOU KNOW...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

AND IN "PLANET OF THE APES"...

...WE HAD GUNS!

SH-TRAKT

SO YOU DID, FREAK...

CHUDT

HWOKK

CHAT

...BUT CHARLTON HESTON STILL WON!

THROKK

CUT.

AND PRINT.

JULIA--ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

Y-YES... I THINK SO, BATMAN...

COME ON--I'LL TAKE YOU AWAY FROM THIS.

LOOKS LIKE WE'RE *OUT OF THE PICTURE*, ROBIN.

YEAH--NOW WE CAN *BOTH* BE JEALOUS.

WELL... THERE'S STILL TIME TO CATCH THE *LATE SHOW*...

CAT-LADY, YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A *DATE*.

AND THE BEGINNING OF A *BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP*?

WELL, NOW, LET'S NOT GO *OVERBOARD* ON THIS THING, HUH?

NEXT: IN *DETECTIVE* #345 **TWO-FACE!**